

THE OAK LEAF

CONNECTICUT CHAPTER THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

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New Ridgefield preserve.

pix by Mrs. Van Kaufman

SPRING MEETING APRIL 7

The chapter's spring meeting will be held on Saturday, April 7, in Redding, at 9:30 A.M. at the John Read Middle School, in conjunction with the Land Trust of Redding. All of the land trusts in the state will be invited to attend. The conference will aim at furthering everyone's knowledge of natural preserves, both in aspects of land acquisition and land management.

The speakers will be Russell Brenneman, chief of the legal staff at the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Herbert V. Camp, Jr., chairman of the finance committee of the State Assembly and John Tyler, of the environment committee of the State Bar Association. Coffee and dessert will be provided for bring-your-own lunches. Afternoon tours of nearby preserves are scheduled.

Town of Avon Repays TNC

The town of Avon has purchased the Musumano tract from The Conservancy, closing the gap between a town park and more open space they own. TNC bought the connecting link last February as a

holding action for the local government when its development loomed imminent, and Avon needed more time to arrange the purchase.

PRESERVE ADDED IN RIDGEFIELD

The Connecticut Chapter has purchased 26.11 acres in Ridgefield as an advance acquisition for the town. This action will enable the Conservation Commission of Ridgefield to have more time to finance the acquisition but will prevent its possible commercial development in the interim. Three years ago, in a similar action, The Conservancy bought Peterson Gorge in Ridgefield. Subsequently, the town purchased this tract as a natural setting for environmental studies at the adjoining Ridgebury School.

The new nature preserve is on Florida Road, off Florida Hill Road in the southern section of Ridgefield. The Conservation Commission, headed by Mrs. C.F. Meffley, feels this area of their town is short of open space, and have been anxious to add to the 34 acre Bolton Land in this section.

The new preserve, purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Hayes, adjoins the town acreage. The land is typical of southern New England reverting woodland, abounding in maple, beech, and white and red oak.

The property has several small swamps, a little pond and one old lumber trail. There are hillocks of rock outcroppings and glacial erratics. Mack Wilson, district agent for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, served as scientific advisor for the project. The Ridgefield Conservation Commission spearheaded the drive for the new preserve. In addition to Mrs. Meffley, its members are Mrs. Sidney G. Kelley, vice-chairman, Donald Archer, Edwin Bard, Mrs. David Halmstad, Mrs. Jere Murphy and Miss Louise Peck.

CONservaTION

by Thomas A. Gaines
Chairman, Conn. Chapter

The Connecticut Chapter of TNC has helped preserve over 7,000 acres in the state in the last twelve years.

Two new factors should permit us to accelerate acquisition activities. One is the completion of the first phase of a program to identify high priority endangered localities in the state (see article on mapping). The second is the availability, for the first time, of a paid staff person to help implement the second phase—finding means to save these areas.

This marriage of two events comes none too soon. The facts of Connecticut life suggest formidable enemies—a high density state of 620 persons per square mile compared to the national average of 58, escalating real estate values and the continuing disappearance of farming. (Last year alone many farmers gave up because of climatic conditions.)

These can all be reduced to one Draconian villain—time. Whatever is saved in the next twenty years is all there will be in a state wedged into the Boston-Washington megalopolis.

Over the years, the Connecticut chapter has been nothing if not efficient. One hundred dollars in land values have been preserved for every dollar of expense. This is the kind of leverage which should make Wall Street envious. With our new capabilities, we will attempt to improve on these figures.

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Summer Students From Inner City

Environmental studies for young inner city children from Waterbury will be held at Juniper Hill Natural Area in Middlebury this summer. The Flanders Nature Center will conduct the classes, with permission of the Middlebury Land Conservation Association, Inc., managers of the preserve.

A previous program involved 300 children from kindergarten to third grade.

PRIORITIES MAPPED

Connecticut is now on the map, a very special map that shows all the most significant natural areas.

The story starts with the New England Natural Resources Center, which undertook a coordinated regional effort to inventory the environmental amenities New England still has. This systematic cataloging of natural assets is called the New England Natural Areas Project. The umbrella agency made a grant to the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association to do the job in Connecticut. John E. Hibbard of the association and Thomas G. Siccama of the Yale School of Forestry with the help of other scientists visited and assayed hundreds of localities. Over four hundred areas were considered worthy of inclusion. From here, the computer took over to collate all the material gathered.

Evaluation Starts

Volunteer Philip Smith then went to work with the raw data, setting up a rating system that weighted each area for quality factors and endangerment factors. In the first category, he gave number values to frequency of occurrence, visual impact, diversity and whether the area was judged significant on a regional, state or local level. The endangerment factors, considered in relationship to each other, were how soon the preservation was threatened and the unknown security. Also taken into account was the size of the acreage involved. From the original list, over seventy areas were given top priority.

Again, the computer was put to work, supplying a printout map of the areas selected by TNC.

The chapter is already in action to save two of these high priority natural areas.

Many colleges and universities are now on a 4-1-4 plan. The inbetween month allows students to work or study at an off campus project.

The Conservancy welcomes students interested in the environmental area to

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Charles L. Scott, II



Charles L. Scott, II has been appointed executive secretary of the Connecticut Chapter, TNC. He is a graduate of Lake Forest College in Illinois and spent a year in graduate study at Yale University. "Scotty" commutes to the Stamford office from New Haven where his wife Judy is directing a tutoring program for young inner-city children.

pix by John Scott

Call for 4-1-4 Volunteers

work and study at the chapter office. January saw Miss Sally Hartigan of Darien doing a valuable job on the mapping project of the state. She is a college freshman at Simon's Rock, Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

Connecticut Forest and Park Association, Inc.

Note:

This page is given over to the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, Inc., in a second of a series to acquaint Conservancy members with valuable sister organizations. It is particularly appropriate for this issue because of the mapping article on page two, showing the related work of CFPA and TNC.

Since its founding in 1895 the Connecticut Forest and Park Association has dedicated itself to the protection and preservation of Connecticut's forests and natural resources. This dedication and effort has resulted in the development of much of our present state park and forest system through the promotion of purchase, gift, and funding of numerous public acquisition programs. The Association's interest in stewardship of land resources has resulted in assistance to local groups such as land trusts and statewide groups such as the Connecticut Chapter in their efforts to protect land for its ecological and open space values.

NATURAL AREA PROGRAM

For the past two years the C.F.P.A. has been involved in the Connecticut Natural Area Project as a part of a New England effort to inventory and develop a protection program for natural areas. The project has provided for the development of a basic inventory of natural areas in the state and a mechanism to update, store and communicate natural area information to interested organizations and individuals at the local, regional and state



Hikers enjoy use of Association's Blue Blazed Trail System.

Bristol Press Photo

levels. The Association is currently assisting various groups in identifying areas for protection by both public and private agencies.

LAND USE PLANNING

The Association has become increasingly interested in the role that land use planning will play in shaping Connecticut's environment. The programs of the Department of Environmental Protection and the Office of State Planning in this field are of particular interest to the organization and its members and will be discussed in its meetings and publications.

HIKING TRAILS

The 500 mile Blue Blazed Trail System is maintained by volunteer members of the organization. This system initiated in 1929 is located on public and private lands, provides the public with a recreational resource at no cost and has been enjoyed by tens of thousands of Connecticut's citizens.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Inseparable from the aims to preserve Connecticut's forest assets and to provide our citizens outdoor recreational opportunities is the organization's anti-pollution program. The Association fights to conserve Connecticut's environment and to enhance the quality of life of all Connecticut citizens. Public and private agencies respect the Association's leadership. Through its statewide Board of Directors and a paid staff knowledgeable about conservation activities throughout the state, C.F.P.A. is in continuing contact with public and private agencies, organizations and individuals with an interest in conservation.

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

Members receive the Association's quarterly publication, *Connecticut Woodlands*, plus newsletters on matters of special interest. Association sponsored conferences and field meetings on conservation are pleasant and informative. Your support of C.F.P.A. will continue its broad, effective conservation program for Connecticut, administered from: Connecticut Forest and Park Association, Inc., 1010 Main Street, East Hartford, Connecticut 06108.

The Nature Conservancy, 151 Brookdale Rd.
Stamford, Connecticut 06903

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Membership Classes



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Supporting	\$50	Junior (18)	\$5

LIFE MEMBERSHIP \$300
* (Includes Life Membership)

Buttermilk Falls Debt Erased By Gift

Buttermilk Falls in Terryville is debt free due to the generosity of Mrs. Mary G. Jameson of Sharon. Her gift was given in memory of her husband, Edwin C. Jameson.

The Falls were purchased in 1970, with a fund-raising drive headed by Robert Tolles. He has remained head of the project committee. With the help of many local citizens, about half of the money to purchase the preserve was assembled. Mrs. Jameson's contribution completed the fund-drive. The 12.62 acres have extraordinary beauty. The falls, one of the highest cascades of water in Connecticut, are surrounded by large hemlocks, pines and mountain laurel. The Mattatuck Hiking Trail traverses the preserve.



Buttermilk Falls, as seen by Mrs. G. William DeSousa and Philip Smith, the chapter's tax consultant. This picture appeared in the New York Times together with a feature story by John C. Devlin.

SB 465 Needs YOUR BACKING

The current session of the Connecticut legislature will consider SB 465. It deserves your backing. The bill will exempt open space land from paying for improvements such as water mains and sewers that they do not use, and cannot afford. The bill covers open land held by The Conservancy and other private, non-profit groups such as Audubon and local land trusts.

While such land is usually exempted from

property tax at this time, it is presently subject to these other assessments. Over 25 thousand acres of land could be lost as open space because of the burden such assessments pose.

For enlightened self-interest, contact your state senator and state representative and urge them to vote for SB 465.

The bill was introduced by Senator Peter Cashman and Representative Herbert Camp in their respective chambers.

PRESERVE GROWTH

Devil's Den

The addition of 15 acres of red maple wetlands to Devil's Den brings The Conservancy's largest preserve in Connecticut to 1471 acres. The holding is in both Redding and Weston. The new wetland area, in Redding, was a gift from the Ledgewood Estates.

Duck Pond Hill

Mrs. Thomas B. Hess has given two additional acres to Duck Pond Hill, the TNC preserve she established in Greenwich in 1969. It now totals ten acres. The hillside preserve overlooks a pond that is a popular refuge for water fowl. On the hill-top are several very large white oaks estimated to be over 150 years old.

Groton

The town of Groton has a new nature preserve, Pequot Woods, received as a gift from Mrs. Lucy Tompkins Wormhoudt. The 79 acres are protected by a reverter clause to TNC.

Trumbull Woods

Mrs. Martha K. Langsdorf gave two acres of woodland to The Conservancy. The Trumbull acreage has been turned over to the Aspetuck Land Trust, with a reverter clause to TNC to insure its preservation.



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